

Conference Paper

Strategy of Language Politeness in Effort to Build character

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Abstract

Language politeness is a reflection of a person's character. Therefore, the character of a person can be built through one of the abilities of language skills, i.e. the ability to use polite language. The strategy of language politeness as one of the efforts to build the character of a nation can be effected through: 1) family education by having habitual, creating a conducive atmosphere and guidance; 2) positive language attitudes, both local and national languages, by building cognitive, affective, and connotative aspects, and 3) mastery of polite vocabularies, both receptive and productive.

Keywords: character building, language attitude, language politeness

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1. Introduction

The ability to establish good communication can be seen from the ability to use polite language. This language skill is called "language politeness." Currently, the problem of politeness is creating a lot of concern; a recent example of this is a crowd of Indonesian people talking about the attitude of a government official in the story. The use of this language becomes a conversation because it is issued by people who are considered intellectual, i.e. both the students and the public official. For the people of Indonesia, an ordinary official when speaking should be able to speak politely because, in addition to being a role model, an official is also a highly educated person whose logic should enable him/her to use language politely.

Theoretically, everyone should speak politely. Everyone is obliged to maintain ethics in communicating so that communication can be achieved. When language is used in communicating with members of the public, it is necessary to consider the language rules, including linguistic and nonlinguistic rules, for the purpose of communicating well. Linguistically, the speaking rule in question is the use of the rules of sound, the words, sentence structure, grammar, and correctly structuring meaning so that communication runs smoothly. If we are orderly in using linguistic rules in communicating, then the interlocutor will easily understand what is communicated by the speaker. In

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addition, the rules of language politeness should also be considered, i.e. the rules that must be adhered to to maintain good relations between speakers and interlocutors.

Yule [1] states that the function of language is not only to communicate, as it also shows the social identity and culture of the language user because the event of communication is characterized by a face-to-face conversation between speakers and interlocutors, the form of which is determined by the social purpose [2]. This means that the ability to communicate is not only determined by language alone, but also by human behavior, because politeness itself is a reflection of the nature and personality of the language user.

When associated with a cultural context, politeness is also a cultural phenomenon. The form of politeness is not universal but is shaped by a social setting, so the form and the background cannot be separated. According to Richard [2], there are three things that determine the form of politeness, i.e. selected cultural norms, situations, and the nature of the message to be conveyed. Because politeness is used to maintain and realize a harmonious relationship [3]. The same thing is emphasized by Watts [4], who states: "There are forms of social behavior classified as cooperation in social interaction (cooperative social interaction) and displaying consideration for others." Therefore, in the interaction between the need to consider to whom we speak, where the conversation takes place, and the subject itself.

Searle [5] states that "speaking a language is a rule-governed form of behavior," and pronouncing a language is self-engagement in the form of obedient behavior of rules. In other words, a person's language attitude will also be seen in the awareness of the language norms, the careful and orderly use of language, and the following of applicable rules, which is related to the attitude toward language. From the above explanation of the theory, it is necessary to have a support strategy for language politeness so that the latter can be pursued. This is important because language politeness is closely related to character development.

2. Results

There are three things that are part of a politeness strategy in developing a character, namely:

2.1. Family education

Ki Hajar Dewantara as an educational leader states that family as one of the Tri of Education Center is so important role of family in education because the influence of family life is constantly felt by a child so it is attached and reflected by the child in his/her behavior [6]. Djaali [7] states that "situasi keluarga sangat berpengaruh terhadap perkembangan bahasa anak sebab anak belajar dari situasi dimana anak tumbuh dan dibesarkan di lingkungan tersebut – family situation is very influential on child language development because children learn from situations where children grow and are raised in the environment." We should remember that the family is the first individual socializing agent. Within the family, a child gets many things as a source of initial knowledge. Soeratman explains that some functions are run by families in the formation of the character of each member, as "the main and most important function undertaken by the family is the forming of character and social behavior – fungsi utama dan terpenting yang dijalankan oleh keluarga adalah membentuk budi pekerti dan perilaku sosial". In line with the above opinion, Rusyana [8] stated:

"..... the form of moral values education in the family is divided into two types, that is, to execute commendable attributes and to abstain from despicable attributes. The praiseworthy and disgraceful nature includes attitude, behavior, and language. Praiseworthy attitude can be reflected in the form of patience, sincerity, responsibility, etc., while a dishonest attitude is the opposite. Commendable behavior can be in the form of manners, helpfulness, simplicity, etc. A commendable language is polite language".

This opinion reaffirms that the family is the first foundation of the educational process, where positive habits are trained in matters relating to politeness and morality.

The results of the study prove that family education has a direct effect on language politeness [9]. This shows that if family education is conducted well, then language politeness will be good too. Changes in family education can be carried out through: developing an effort to create a harmonious atmosphere, parental attitudes, familiarizing children from an early age with using good language when communicating, applying rules for all family members, involving children in family talks as a form of respect for the family members [9].

The findings indicate that family education is the variable with the greatest influence on language politeness. The magnitude of the influence of family education on language politeness shows how important it is that education is conducted by the

family from an early age. Thus, the aspect of family education becomes the dominant factor in efforts to develop and improve language politeness.

According to the theory of language acquisition, a person acquires language skills through imitation and conditioning mechanisms. Language acquisition occurs when a child imitates the language or vocabulary patterns of those who are significant to them, usually a parent or caregiver or habituation of speech that the child hears and associates with the object or event in question [10].

Based on the above concepts, language politeness should be directed more towards family education as a starting point and spearhead of real education. Therefore, language politeness is directed at developing the potential that focuses on family activities that can create polite language.

2.2. Language attitude

Searle [5] states that "speaking a language is a rule-governed form of behavior," and pronouncing a language is self-engagement in the form of obedient behavior of rules. In other words, a person's language attitude will also be seen in the awareness of language norms, the careful and orderly use of language, and the following of applicable rules, which is related to the attitude of language.

The research findings prove that the attitude toward language influences language politeness [9]. The attitude toward language can best be seen from the positive attitude towards the language. A positive attitude relates to attitudes or behaviors that do not conflict with rules or norms. Geertz [11] explains that polite is the language used by society by observing the social relations between speakers and listening and the form of status and familiarity. In line with the above opinion, Pennebaker et al. [12] states that polite language is related to grammar, and word choice. Both of these opinions imply that in polite language, it is necessary to consider status and familiarity in choosing words when talking to others. A positive language attitude will only be reflected if the user has a sense of "faithfulness" in preserving and maintaining his/her language as a means to communicate. A positive attitude is in someone who has a sense of pride in his/her language as a marker of identity.

The attitude toward language has a direct positive effect on the politeness of language, which means that the improvement of language attitudes will result in an increase in language politeness. Thus, language politeness can be pursued through language attitudes by being positive toward both regional and national languages by building cognitive, affective, and conative aspects [9].

2.3. Vocabulary mastery

Awareness of the rules of language will be apparent in the mastery of vocabulary. Proper vocabulary in accordance with the situation will cultivate an attitude of appreciation among the interlocutors. The choice of the right, polite words in accordance with the situation of the conversation will increase the value of the communication itself. Kasper [13] mentions that there are three difficulties in communication, namely the difficulty of choosing the meaning, the difficulty of choosing the form, and the difficulty of choosing the right speech rules. This shows that the ability to communicate is influenced by the mastery of language aspects including the structure of the language, proper vocabulary mastery, and understanding of the context of communicating. Therefore, vocabulary mastery needs to be optimized as an effort to improve language politeness. Vocabulary mastery will determine whether or not successful communication is established.

The findings of this study suggest that there is a positive direct effect of vocabulary knowledge on students' language politeness, thereby empirically supporting and reinforcing the theory or opinion of experts about the influence of vocabulary knowledge on language politeness. Many at least the vocabulary will determine the quality of the language as Harris [14] states: "kata sebagai pusat gagasan sehingga mutlak dikuasai agar dapat berkomunikasi lisan secara efektif – Words are at the center of ideas so have to be absolutely mastered in order to communicate verbally effectively". It seems clear from this statement that in building communication, vocabulary knowledge is an absolute requirement. Kasper [13], states that there are three difficulties in communication, i.e. the difficulty of choosing meaning, the difficulty of choosing form, and the difficulty of choosing the right speech rules. This means that the ability to communicate is influenced by the mastery of language aspects, including the structure of the language, appropriate vocabulary knowledge, and an understanding of the context of conversations. If these aspects are controlled, the problem or difficulty with communication will not happen.

Thus, polite vocabulary knowledge is essential so that when speaking one can generate respect from both parties and facilitate smooth communication. Watts [4] argues that language politeness is a language attitude that shows respect and tolerance towards the interlocutor. This means that when someone communicates with others, the speakers use the vocabulary they have. When selecting vocabulary the elements of communication need to be considered, i.e. to whom one speaks, under what circumstances, and what language varieties should be used.

Brown and Levinson [15] affirmed that “every speaker before making a speech must make a decision as to whether his speech will hurt his interlocutor’s feelings or not. If not, then the speaker will continue to convey his speech without hesitation”. Therefore, proper vocabulary mastery adapted to the interlocutor and place of conversation is essential to establish good communication. Thus, polite vocabulary mastery is very important. It can lead to benefits for both parties and have an impact on smooth communication.

3. Conclusion

Speech is a reflection of one’s character. Therefore a person’s character can be built through one of his/her abilities in using polite language. The strategy of language politeness as one of the efforts to build the character of a nation can be effected through (1) family education, habituation, creating a conducive atmosphere, and guidance; (2) positive language attitudes both toward local and national languages by building cognitive, affective, and conative aspects; and (3) mastery of vocabulary by means of mastering polite vocabulary, both receptive and productive.

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